

REMARKS:

In response to the Office Action mailed August 31, 2006, claims 2 and 16 have been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 41-45 have been added. Thus, claims 1, 3-9, 11-15, 17-19, 21-29, and 31-45 are currently pending.

Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to include all of the limitations of allowable claims 2 and 16, respectively. Allowable claims 4, 11, 18, 22, and 23 have been rewritten in independent form, independent claims 7 and 14 have been amended back to depend from claim 1, and independent claim 29 has been amended back to depend from claim 25. Finally, claims 12 and 13 have also been rewritten in independent form.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 12, 13, 25, 31, 36, 37, and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,198,965 ("the Penner et al. reference"), and claims 1, 3, 6-8, 14, 15, 17, 21, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,198,971 ("the Leysieffer reference").

First, Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 5, 9, 24, 27, 32-35, 38, and 40 are allowed and that claims 2, 4, 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, and 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 2 and 16, respectively. Claims 4, 11, 18, 22, and 23 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

With respect to the rejections based upon the Penner et al. reference, filed concurrently herewith is a declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.132 from the common inventor of the present

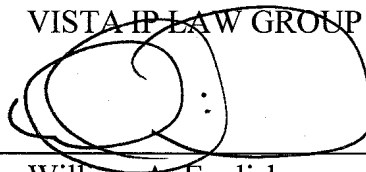
application and the Penner et al. reference. The declaration confirms that the subject matter disclosed in the Penner et al. reference was conceived by the common inventor and not by another person. Accordingly, the rejections of claims 12, 13, 25, 31, 36, 37, and 39, which were only rejected based upon the Penner et al. reference should be withdrawn. Thus, claims 12, 13, 25, 28, 29, 31, 36, 37, and 39 should all now be allowable.

Turning to the rejections based upon the Leysieffer reference, claims 1 and 15 have been amended to include all of the limitations of allowable claims 2 and 16, respectively, and therefore should now be allowable. In addition, claims 3, 6-8, 14 which depend from claim 1, and claims 17 and 21, which depend from claim 15, should also now be allowable. Accordingly, the rejections based upon the Leysieffer reference should be withdrawn.

Based upon the foregoing amendments, all of the pending claims in the present application should now be allowable. It is respectfully submitted that all rejections have been overcome by the above amendments. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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